

“Real, meaningful change in communities doesn’t happen from the top down, it happens from the ground up. It happens when you build on the strengths that already exist in those communities. It happens when you empower the leaders that are already there, and then they go on to empower others.”

- First Lady Michelle Obama, at a Peace Corps training event, in Siem Reap, Cambodia, March 21, 2015



“The relationships of trust that Volunteers build with their communities are the driving force behind Peace Corps’ impact. Their presence among the people they serve is what gives our Volunteers the understanding of the local context and the credibility to become catalysts of community-led change. We help our communities recognize the potential within themselves and build upon it for a brighter future.”

Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet

Building Capacity, Building Peace:

The Peace Corps Under the Obama Administration, 2009-2017



Peace Corps under the Obama Administration: 55 Years and Beyond

The Peace Corps' approach to development is unique. The agency sends trained, skilled Americans abroad on behalf of the United States to work side by side with host communities to tackle some of the most pressing challenges of our time: girls' education; climate change; youth entrepreneurship; food security; HIV/AIDS and malaria. Peace Corps Volunteers live and work in communities that are beyond the reach of other development agencies, giving Volunteers the credibility, community support, and access they need to achieve measurable results. This, in turn, helps Peace Corps ensure that the development investments of our partner agencies are owned by the community, properly implemented, monitored, and evaluated and sustained over time.

Living and working at the "last mile," Peace Corps Volunteers build powerful relationships of trust with the people they serve. In the process, Volunteers gain intercultural understanding and a life-long commitment to service that not only positions returned Volunteers for success in today's global economy, but also builds the next generation of globally competent American leaders.

Since President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961 with three goals – to build local capacity in developing nations, share American culture with other peoples, and bring the world back home – some 220,000 Americans of all ages have served in 141 countries worldwide. These goals continue to drive the agency to this day.

In 2009, President Barack Obama took office with a strong commitment to the Peace Corps. Within the first 100 days of the Administration, he signed into law the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, challenging all Americans to find a way to serve.

"I ask every American to make an enduring commitment to serving your community and your country in whatever way you can.... And together, we will measure our progress not just in the number of hours served or volunteers mobilized, but in the

impact our efforts have on the life of this nation.... We need your service right now, at this moment in history. I'm not going to tell you what your role should be; that's for you to discover. But I'm asking you to stand up and play your part. I'm asking you to help change history's course, put your shoulder up against the wheel. And if I—if you do, I promise you your life will be richer, our country will be stronger, and someday, years from now, you may remember it as the moment when your own story and the American story converged, when they came together, and we met the challenges of our new century."

—President Obama, Signing of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, April 21, 2009

During the Obama Administration, the Peace Corps reached its highest number of Volunteers since 1971, with 9,095 serving in 2011; and received its highest appropriation in the agency's history during the President's final year in office. Since the beginning of the Obama Administration, the Peace Corps has opened eight country programs—Colombia, Comoros, Indonesia, Kosovo, Nepal, Palau, Sierra Leone, and Timor-Leste—and commenced the process of opening new country programs in Myanmar (Burma) and Vietnam. The agency also launched Let Girls Learn, a whole-of-government initiative spearheaded by the President and First Lady to break down barriers to girls' education through sustainable, community-led change.

The Peace Corps celebrated significant milestones, including the agency's 50th anniversary, which was marked by participation in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and other historic events, and the 20th anniversary of Peace Corps Response, Peace Corps' short-term volunteer program for highly-skilled professionals. The year 2015 marked the 20th anniversary of Camp GLOW (Girls Leading Our World), a Volunteer-created youth initiative that provides educational and leadership training for girls and young women around the world.

New Country Programs And Re-Entries



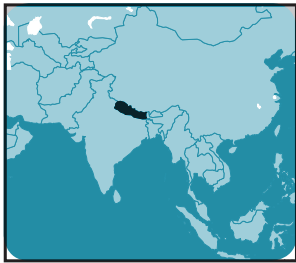
Comoros



Indonesia



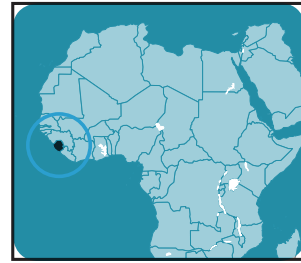
Kosovo (new)



Nepal



Palau



Sierra Leone



Timor-Leste



Burma/Myanmar (new)



Viet Nam (new)

Under the leadership of Peace Corps Directors Aaron Williams and Carrie Hessler-Radelet, the agency successfully implemented the most extensive reform effort ever undertaken in its history, designed to modernize agency operations, strengthen Volunteer support, increase Volunteer impact, and boost the agency's visibility and reach. These efforts have yielded significant results and the Peace Corps is now well-positioned to grow its Volunteer force in the coming years.

In addition to revamping agency programs to better support Volunteers and increase impact in

host countries, the Peace Corps has worked hand in hand with other U.S. government agencies to bolster results in grassroots development and diplomacy, including combating HIV/AIDS and malaria, promoting food security, improving access to education for women and girls, and sharing the best of America with the world.

At the close of the Obama Administration, the Peace Corps is a dynamic, effective force for good -- more strategic in maximizing impact, and better positioned than ever before to tackle the most pressing development challenges of our generation.



Revitalizing Recruitment and Outreach: An Innovative Agency

In July 2014, the Peace Corps announced historic changes to its recruitment, application, and selection process in order to remain competitive and keep pace with today's rapidly changing world. Peace Corps applicants can now choose to apply to specific programs and countries, selecting the path that best fits their personal and professional goals. The revised online application takes about one hour to finish—reduced from eight hours—and has contributed to a dramatically improved rate of completion.

This forward-leaning reform has had dramatic success. In the second full year the new application process was in place, nearly 25,000 Americans applied for Peace Corps service – shattering a 41 year record for the most applications received in a single year. Following is a sample of some of our recruitment and outreach innovations:

Stepped up diversity recruitment efforts: Peace Corps' goal is to recruit a Volunteer force that reflects the diversity of our multi-cultural nation. To achieve this goal, Peace Corps developed a robust diversity recruitment strategy to reach previously underrepresented applicant groups. The agency has collaborated with universities, civic organizations, service clubs, local and regional minority-serving institutions and returned Volunteer groups to support the engagement of diverse communities and potential applicants. Since 2009, the percentage of Volunteers who self-identify as members of an underrepresented community has increased by 10 percent -- from 18 percent in 2009 to 28 percent in 2015. The agency has also worked to advance the 2011 Presidential Memorandum on International Initiatives to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons by placing same-sex Volunteer couples in the field; actively supporting LGBTQ Peace Corps staff and Volunteers; and strengthening training and resources to foster an inclusive and supportive agency culture and environment for trainees, Volunteers, and staff members alike.

Launched the new Let Girls Learn initiative: The Peace Corps proudly joined President Obama and

First Lady Michelle Obama in launching a new whole-of-government effort to break down the barriers to education for adolescent girls and young women around the world. Educating girls is essential to healthy and thriving communities but, globally, 62 million girls are not in school, and the barriers to adolescent girls completing school are particularly significant. In some countries, fewer than 10 percent of teenage girls complete secondary school. By the close of the Administration, roughly 4,800 Peace Corps Volunteers in 40 countries will have received additional training to become agents of change for girls' education in their communities. With the help of corporate partners and thousands of individuals from all over the U.S., the Peace Corps is funding hundreds of community-led projects to open doors of opportunity to education for adolescent girls in Africa, Asia, Southeast Europe, and Central and South America through the Let Girls Learn Fund.

Expanded partnerships with private sector and U.S. government organizations: The Peace Corps has leveraged public-private partnerships and intergovernmental collaboration to increase impact and improve the quality of technical support for Volunteers' work. This includes ongoing partnerships with other federal agencies, including the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, Feed the Future, the President's Malaria Initiative, and Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths. It also includes innovative partnerships such as the Global Health Service Partnership, language technology resources with Duolingo and unprecedented private sector support from organizations such as the Xerox Foundation, the IBM Foundation, the UPS Foundation, Land's End, and more. The Peace Corps is also an active leader in Employers of National Service, a U.S. government program to promote hiring returned Peace Corps Volunteers, Americorps Alums and other members of our national service corps.

Launched a revitalized brand platform: On June 1, 2016, the Peace Corps unveiled a refreshed brand that underscores the agency's commitment to engaging the next generation of Americans who want to make positive change in the world. The new

look embraces a digitally focused communications approach and aims to make the Peace Corps more accessible to public audiences through the platforms they already use. Built to fit Peace Corps' mission, the refreshed platform includes an updated logo with a bright, modern look, and a bold new website, overhauled to be responsive and completely mobile-friendly. Together the elements tell a compelling story that is authentic, fresh and engaging while still honoring the agency's historic roots.

Fostered innovation: The Peace Corps established itself as a leader in the creation and use of open geographic data, leveraging the energy, creativity, and local knowledge of Volunteers and their host communities to contribute to global mapping efforts. To date, over 2.5 million open geographic data points have been created to support over 150 Peace Corps projects around the world from a national malaria bed net distribution in Madagascar, to optimizing locations of reproductive health dispensaries in Botswana, to helping Peace Corps Staff communicate security-based go and no-go zones in Kingston, Jamaica.

Boosted global engagement among Americans: Peace Corps' Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services was created in 2012 to focus more resources on returned Peace Corps Volunteer engagement and advancement of what is known as the agency's Third Goal: to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. Since its creation, the office has supported over 10,000 Third Goal activities by returned Volunteers to inspire better understanding

of the people and cultures of their host countries through presentations to classrooms, community groups, and organizations, as well as at cultural festivals. The office has also supported almost 3,000 returned Volunteers through career transition and engaged 600 employers, over 40 percent of which are federal agencies, who value the unique intercultural and technical skills that returned Volunteers bring to their organizations

Enhanced staff learning and development: Through the Partnership for Public Service, the Peace Corps has been honored as one of the top three Best Places to Work in the Federal Government for the past three consecutive years. With the creation of the Office of Staff Learning and Development in 2015, the Peace Corps continues to strive to become a high-performing learning organization by investing in professional development for staff, improving staff retention, facilitating knowledge exchange, and strengthening staff performance. Our commitment to building Peace Corps as a learning organization is key to maximizing staff retention given the current limitations of the agency's unique five-year appointment rule.





Reshaping Safety and Security: A Volunteer-Centered Approach

The Peace Corps has undergone a profound culture shift during the course of the Obama Administration, placing Volunteers at the center of agency priorities, and refocusing resources on the quality of Volunteer support. Today, the agency is better-positioned than ever to address safety and security, with many more tools to draw on in analyzing and managing risk. In addition, advancements in medical care and best practices in the areas of mental health and sexual assault risk reduction and response have enabled higher-quality support for Volunteers. Following are a few examples:

Developed and implemented a cutting-edge Sexual Assault Risk-Reduction and Response program:

The Peace Corps has implemented a Sexual Assault Risk-Reduction and Response (SARRR) program designed to reduce the risk of sexual assault and ensure Volunteers receive compassionate, timely, and comprehensive support. The SARRR program includes more than 30 policy changes, including the creation of an Office of Victim Advocacy, extensive training for Volunteers and staff, and new clearly defined procedures for reducing the risk of sexual assault and responding to Volunteers who are victims of sexual assault. The agency has fully implemented the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011 and has gone beyond the law's requirements to provide first-rate support and care to Volunteers who are victims of crime. The agency encourages Volunteers to report incidents to Peace Corps staff and seek out support by providing the utmost confidentiality and promoting a Volunteer-driven process.

Strengthened the delivery of health services: The Peace Corps is committed to providing high-quality health care to all Volunteers, no matter where they serve. To ensure the delivery of high-quality care, the Peace Corps has:

- Improved the oversight of health care service delivery in the field by improving the supervision, hiring, credentialing, and management of Peace Corps medical officers at each post.

- Created a Health Care Quality Assurance Council to oversee, monitor, and report on the quality of Peace Corps health services. Created a Quality Nurse hotline to give Volunteers access to additional medical advice and an avenue to lodge concerns.

- Implemented an electronic medical records system to provide accurate, up-to-date, and complete care at the point of care; enable quick access to patient records for coordinated, efficient care; help providers to more effectively diagnose patients, reduce medical errors and provide safe care; and enhance the privacy and security of patient data.

- Addressed challenges in post-service care by conducting extensive analysis of post-service Volunteer health-care issues and collaborating with the U.S. Department of Labor to create solutions that address concerns related to Volunteer claims under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act. Revitalized and expanded the Post-Service Unit to give returned Volunteers direct access to medical care and billing support throughout the post-service claims process.

- Improved mental health services by stationing mental health providers at regional medical hubs, utilizing evidence-supported techniques in mental health treatment, and revamping the medical evacuation process in Washington, D.C.

Implemented intercultural competency, diversity and inclusion training and support for staff and Volunteers:

The Peace Corps feels strongly that the staff and Volunteer force should reflect the beautiful multicultural diversity of the nation. The Agency also believes that it is important to support and celebrate the diversity of the Peace Corps Volunteer and staff family by creating an open and inclusive environment in which all can thrive. Recognizing that diversity will enhance the achievement of long-term agency goals, the Peace Corps has undertaken the following initiatives to strengthen diversity and inclusion at the Peace Corps:

- Expanded intercultural competency, diversity, and inclusion training and support to our country programs through a rigorous program to educate Volunteers and staff on equity and inclusion while strengthening support to diverse Volunteers and staff.

- Launched the Same-Sex Couple Initiative to prepare posts to receive same-sex couples and

strengthen posts' overall support to our LGBTQ Volunteers and staff. Since 2014, 19 country programs have received training on diversity and inclusion in preparation for placement of same-sex couple Volunteers, with an additional two trainings scheduled through the end of 2016.

Realigning to Maximize Impact: A Data-Driven Agency

The foundation of the Peace Corps' reform effort was a Comprehensive Agency Assessment commissioned in January 2010—a six-month process that resulted in a new strategic plan for the Peace Corps. Beginning with this assessment, the Peace Corps has focused on using data to drive our decision-making—measuring for impact, and enacting rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all programs.

The Peace Corps is committed to maximizing grassroots development impact and strengthening relationships with host country partners by enacting the following:

Established an annual Country Portfolio Review process: Strategic decisions regarding potential new country entries and allocation of Volunteers and other resources are guided through this process. The Country Portfolio Review results help the agency focus its work where the need is greatest and potential for impact is highest, ensuring the most efficient use of tax dollars.

Enhanced information sharing: At headquarters and international posts, significant investments and improvements in global network performance and reliability, mobile and remote access technology, and scalable information technology infrastructure have successfully been implemented. These upgrades have enabled increased engagement of returned Volunteers; enhanced tools for tracking, reporting, and responding to crime and security incidents against Volunteers; and improved tools for analyzing Volunteer impact.

Overhauled technical training and program support to increase Volunteer impact: After extensive analysis of Volunteer programs, the agency completely revamped its technical training and support systems to refocus Volunteer projects on evidence-based interventions that have proven to be most effective in achieving development impact. As part of that process, the agency established standardized sector-wide logical frameworks and a robust monitoring and evaluation plan. In the area of programming and training, the Peace Corps has established standardized learning objectives for each sector in which Volunteers serve, and revised technical training packages and training curricula to give Volunteers the skills and tools they need to implement evidence-based best practices at the community level.

Refocused on data-informed decision-making and rigorous monitoring and evaluation: The Peace Corps is committed to using data to better track outcomes and report on common indicators across all Peace Corps countries. These reforms, among others, have positioned the agency to have an even greater impact in the years ahead, through the following:

- Expanded data sources to provide additional perspectives on Volunteers' impact and agency operations. In 2012, Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet tasked agency researchers with finding ways to capture the voices of additional stakeholders to complement the Annual Volunteer Survey. In response, the agency developed two new agency-level surveys—the Global Counterpart Survey and the Host Country Staff Survey—both of which enable the agency to use

multiple sources of data to measure progress towards key performance goals.

- Enhanced data for program evaluation as well as existing and future project development. The Peace Corps published guidance and instituted a process to collect baseline data for new country entries and new projects for the first time in the agency's history.
- Conducted in-depth research for a special case study on the Peace Corps' historic impact on global efforts to eradicate smallpox. In-depth interviews with Volunteers and returned Volunteers who participated in the final chapters of the global eradication program in the 1960s and 1970s showed how they worked alongside host country governments, CDC and WHO in 35 countries.

Partnership in Action: A Collaborative Agency

The Peace Corps continues to build and leverage strategic partnerships to advance community-based development and has seen tremendous success with the following:

- Continued implementation of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the new blueprint for an AIDS-free generation. The agency has pursued the targeted goals of scaling up HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment; using evidence-based interventions for populations at greatest risk; promoting sustainability, efficiency, and effectiveness; strengthening local health care and support systems; and driving results with science. The Peace Corps is currently active in 26 PEPFAR countries, 10 which are considered high HIV-burden countries.
- Expanded the Peace Corps Response program through groundbreaking partnerships and targeted recruiting. Since 1996, Peace Corps Response has placed more than 2,875 seasoned professionals in short-term, high-impact assignments in more than 50 countries. Since 2012, the innovative Peace Corps Global Health Service Partnership with PEPFAR and Seed Global Health has sent over 95 doctors and nurses to serve in one-year assignments as adjunct faculty in medical and nursing schools in Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda.
- Supported the President's Malaria Initiative through the agency's Stomping Out Malaria in Africa initiative. Volunteers in 22 Peace Corps programs across Africa continue to collaborate to eradicate malaria

by carrying out malaria prevention, diagnosis, and treatment education campaigns at the community level. Peace Corps Volunteers have designed and implemented a community-based malaria diagnostic and treatment program that significantly helped reduce the odds of symptomatic malaria in 15 Senegalese communities. The pilot program's effectiveness was recently highlighted in the *Journal of Tropical Medicine and International Health*, and Senegal's National Malaria Control Program has expanded the approach to reach 1.5 million people, nearly 10 percent of its population.

- Advanced the President's Feed the Future Initiative in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development. Peace Corps Volunteers are supporting the President's Feed the Future initiative by promoting sustainable methods for communities to assure their own food security through increased agricultural productivity, improved economic opportunity, and improved health and nutrition. More than 3,500 Peace Corps Volunteers in 55 countries have tapped into Feed the Future funds to help bring important food security messages and practices to their communities.
- Actively supported global young leaders. Recognizing the importance of providing opportunities for youth to strengthen civil society across the world, the Peace Corps has collaborated with the White House on young leaders program initiatives in Africa (Young African Leaders Initiative), Southeast Asia (Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative), and Latin America (the newly formed Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative). These efforts continue to provide innovative leadership training opportunities in both the United States and abroad for young adults working in civic leadership, business and entrepreneurship, and public management.

Through these partnerships, Volunteers have been able to maximize the impact of U.S. government development assistance and ensure that those projects are implemented effectively, owned by the community and sustained over time at the last mile.

